



# Does referring to age norms affect older adults' motivation to exercise? An experimental study on 'Pattern Stepping'

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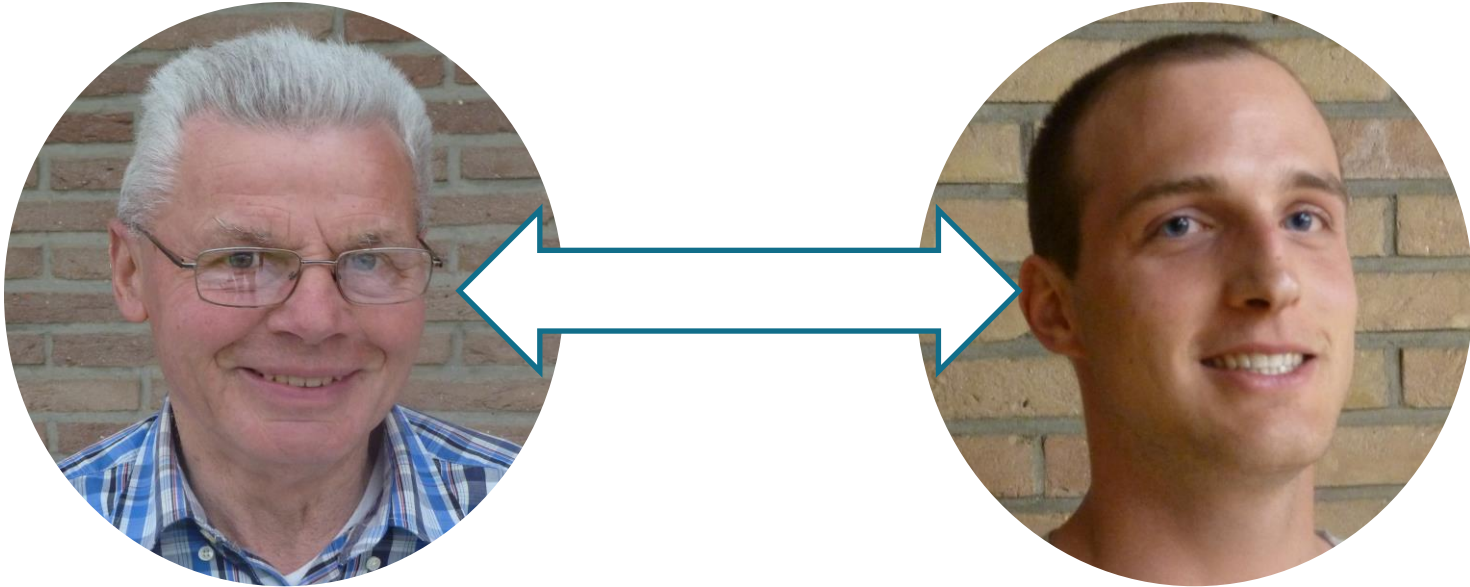
Department of Kinesiology

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# Age norms for exercise/sports



# Activity norms for older adults



Aqua Gym      Biking      Tennis      Football  
Nordic Walking      Running      Swimming      Triathlon      Skateboarding  
Walking      Snowboarding      Acrobatics  
Bowling/Pétanque

# It's a match!



Personal preferences



Social norms

# It's a mismatch!



Personal preferences



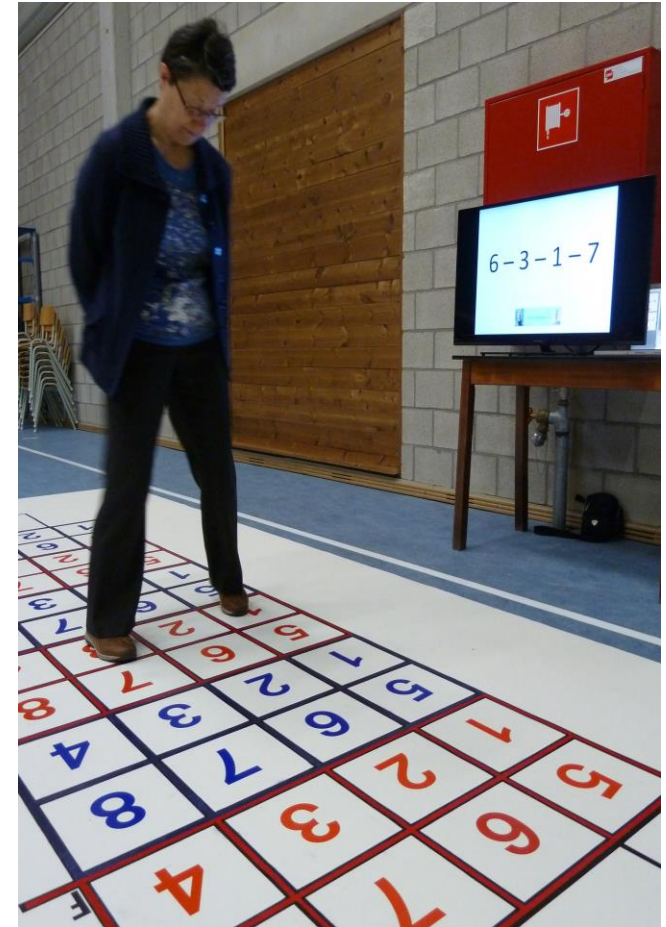
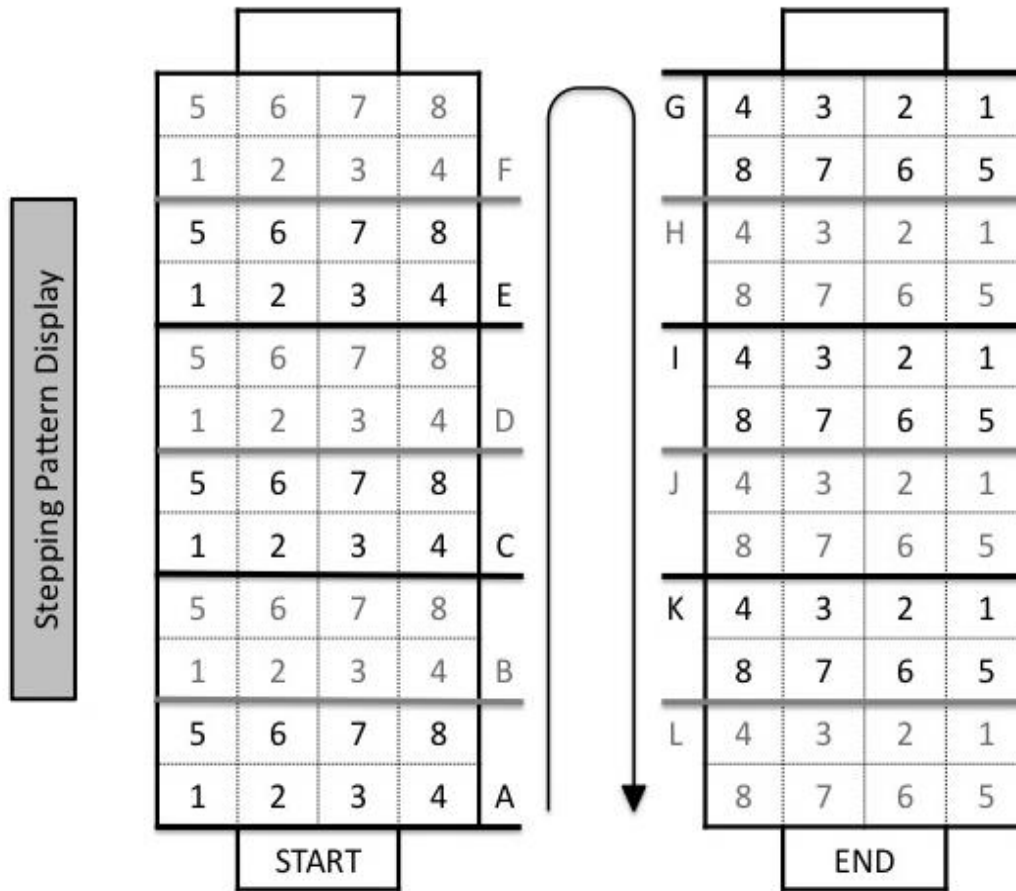
Social norms

# What is the effect of manipulated age norms on autonomous motivation?





# Pattern Stepping



# Method

**Participants:**  $n = 120$ , 65-70 years old ( $M = 66.75$ )

## Conditions

	<b>Salience of Identity as an Older Adult</b>	<b>Valence of Older Age Norms for Pattern Stepping</b>
<b>Control</b>		
<b>Salient</b>	✓	
<b>Salient -</b>	✓	Negative
<b>Salient +</b>	✓	Positive



# Manipulations

## **Salience of identity as an older adult:**

*“Compared to when I was a young(er) adult, I now am/have...”*

## **Valence of older age norms for pattern stepping:**

*“Please look at this invitation for a Pattern Stepping Class...”*

# Control

*Do you like to exercise?  
Or would you like to start exercising?*

**then participate in ...**



**the popular  
new exercise activity!**

**Discover it for free  
in our class!**

*Charlotte*

*"Friends asked me to join them in Pattern Stepping. I had never heard of it before. I liked it. Now I meet with friends weekly to try out new and more difficult patterns"*

*Matthieu*

*"I enjoy Pattern Stepping. It is relaxing."*

# Salient

*Do you like to exercise?  
Or would you like to start exercising?*

**then participate in ...**



**the popular  
new exercise activity!**

**Discover it for free  
in our class!**



*Charlotte, 20 years old*

*"Friends asked me to join them in Pattern Stepping. I had never heard of it before. I liked it. Now I meet with friends weekly to try out new and more difficult patterns"*



*Matthieu, 70 years old*

*"I enjoy Pattern Stepping. It is relaxing."*

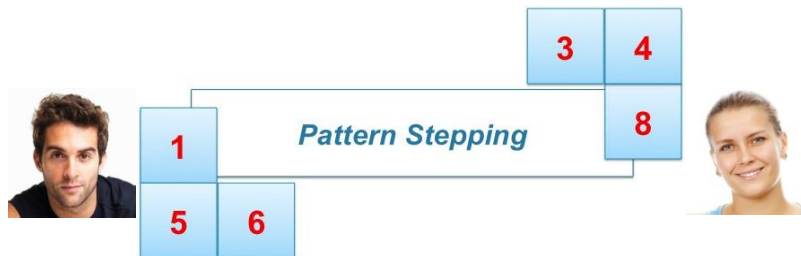


# Salient -

**Are you over 65 years old?**

*Do you like to exercise?  
Or would you like to start exercising?*

**then participate in ...**



**the popular  
new exercise activity  
among young adults!**

**Discover it for free  
in our class!**



Charlotte, 20 years old

*"Friends asked me to join them in Pattern Stepping. I had never heard of it before. I liked it. Now I meet with friends weekly to try out new and more difficult patterns."*



Stijn, 25 years old

*"I enjoy Pattern Stepping. It is relaxing. It is very popular among people of my age."*



# Salient +

**Are you over 65 years old?**

*Do you like to exercise?  
Or would you like to start exercising?*

**then participate in ...**



**the popular  
new exercise activity  
among older adults!**

**Discover it for free  
in our class!**



Charlotte, 65 years old

*"Friends asked me to join them in Pattern Stepping. I had never heard of it before. I liked it. Now I meet with friends weekly to try out new and more difficult patterns."*



Matthieu, 70 years old

*"I enjoy Pattern Stepping. It is relaxing. It is very popular among people of my age."*



# Hypothesis

**Salient -** < **Salient** < **Control** < **Salient +**

ID



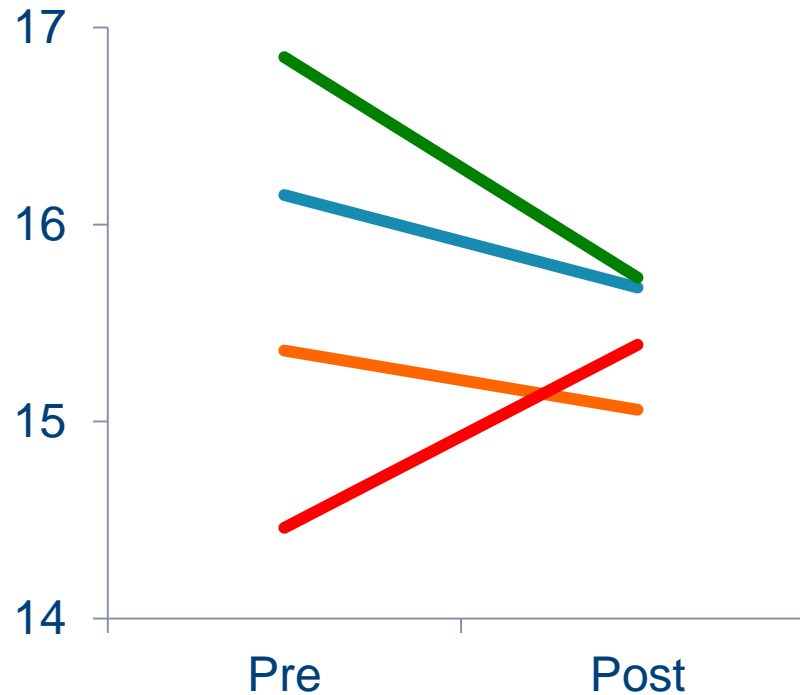
NORM





# Exercise

## Relative Autonomy Index



$F(3,113) = 2.98^*, \eta^2 = .070$

**Salient-** vs. **Salient+**  $p < .05$

— Control — Salient — Salient - — Salient +

# It's a only match when you identify as an older adult



Personal preferences



Social norms



**Identification ?**

# Conclusions

- Salient (age) norms affect motivation, but their impact might depend on the level of identification.
- Old age is a tricky group identity to refer to: categorization is not identification!



# Don't let norms define you!

